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Identifiers-*California, Inventory of Self Appraisal, W. Lloyd Warner Index of Status Characteristics

Freshmen of lower and middle socioeconomic status identified by the W. Lloyd Warner Index of Status Characteristics were studied to determine: (1) differences in the motives, values, attitudes, goals, aspirations, self-concepts, and interests of these two groups; (2) if any of these factors distinguish between nonachievers (GPA below 2.0) of different socioeconomic backgrounds; (3) if measures of motivation distinguish between achieving and nonachieving students; (4) if socioeconomic background is related to achievement in junior college and career aspirations; and (5) the implications of the findings. Among the conclusions: (1) achieving lower-class students have a higher need to achieve than achieving middle-class students; (2) the high proportion of Mexican-American students in the lower socioeconomic group typically receive D or F grades in the lowest available remedial English class, which contributes substantially to their underachievement; and (3) the personality measures administered distinguish between socioeconomic groups, but not between achievers and nonachievers. It was concluded overall that the junior college is not meeting the needs of many of its students, and special curricula and help from the counseling staff in providing realistic evaluation of students' aspirations are needed. (MC)

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PERSONALITY AND ATTITUDE VARIABLES AMONG ACHIEVING AND NONACHIEVING COLLEGE OF THE SEQUOIAS FRESHMEN FROM DIFFERENT SOCIOECONOMIC BACKGROUNDS

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ED 027016

I. Purpose of the study

The study sought answers to the following questions:

1. What differences, if any, may be identified in the motives, values, attitudes, goals, aspirations, self-concepts, and interests of students from very low and middle socioeconomic backgrounds?

2. Do these personality factors distinguish between nonachievers from different socioeconomic backgrounds? (Achieving = 2.0 g.p.a. and above.)

3. Do measures of motivation to achieve distinguish between academically achieving and nonachieving students?

4. Are students' socioeconomic backgrounds related to their achievement in junior college?

5. What differences in career aspirations exist between students from middle and lower socioeconomic backgrounds?

6. What counseling and curricular implications do the answers to the above questions have for the junior college?

II. Students included in the study

Subjects for the study were identified by means of the W. Lloyd Warner Index of Status Characteristics. Classification into either lower-lower or middle-middle socioeconomic status was based on the following factors:

1. Source of income (Wages, salary, profits, social security, etc.)

2. Occupation (Profession, semi-profession, skilled labor, unskilled labor, etc.)

3. House type (Quality of dwelling and state of repair)

4. Dwelling area (Highly desirable neighborhood, slum, etc.)

Counselors and administrators from the following high schools aided in the selection of subjects from among their senior classes: Corcoran Union High School, Exeter Union High School, Hanford Union High School, Lindsay Union High School, Mt. Whitney High School, Orosi Union High School, Redwood High School, Strathmore High School, Tulare Union High School, Tulare Western High School, and Woodlake Union High School.

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Preliminary identification of students in the numbers shown below were made:

Lower Socioeconomic		Middle Socioeconomic	
Mexican-American	188	Mexican-American	5
All other	150	All other	495
Total lower	338	Total middle	500

To create approximately equal groups, every other middle class student was randomly deleted from the study. Because of their numbers, the lower socio-economic class Mexican-American students comprised a special subgroup for study. Middle-class Mexican-American students, because of their limited numbers, were included with the total middle-class group.

Table 1

Attrition Among Original Groups of Subjects Planning to Enroll in College

Socioeconomic and Ethnic Groups		Students Selected in Spring, 1967		Students Who Registered in Summer, 1967		Students Who Were Still Enrolled After Ninth Week, Fall Semester	
LOWER:		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Mexican-American	Women	92	100.0	63	68.5	55	59.8
	Men	96	100.0	61	63.5	56	58.3
Total Mexican-American		188	100.0	124	65.9	111	59.0
All Others	Women	70	100.0	47	67.1	43	61.4
	Men	80	100.0	55	68.8	50	62.5
Total All Others		150	100.0	102	68.0	93	62.0
Total Lower		338	100.0	226	66.9	204	60.4
MIDDLE:							
	Women	115	100.0	98	85.2	93	80.9
	Men	135	100.0	120	88.9	114	84.4
Total Middle		250	100.0	218	87.2	207	82.8

Table 2

College Qualification Test Total Score Percentile Rankings by Socioeconomic and Ethnic Group

Total Score Percentile Rank	Lower				Middle	
	Mexican-American		All Others			
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
90-99	0	1	4	1	18	17
80-89	2	0	1	1	5	8
70-79	0	1	3	6	16	17
60-69	2	2	4	6	9	8
50-59	2	3	4	2	10	8
40-49	4	3	1	5	13	12
30-39	5	8	8	6	15	4
20-29	14	5	3	5	10	8
10-19	9	14	8	7	10	8
0-9	18	18	14	4	8	3
TOTAL	56	55	50	43	114	93
Median	20.2	16.3	29.5	37.8	50.5	63.9

Table 3

ENGLISH PLACEMENT TEST
(PER CENT)

ENGLISH CLASS PLACEMENT	SOCIOECONOMIC GROUPS					
	MIDDLE		LOWER			
			Mexican-American		All Others	
	Men (N=114)	Women (N=93)	Men (N=56)	Women (N=55)	Men (N=50)	Women (N=43)
English 1a	24.8	44.0	3.6	5.6	11.8	30.2
English 51	40.2	47.3	23.2	40.7	33.3	39.6
English 50	35.0	8.7	73.2	53.7	54.9	30.2

III. Measuring Instruments Used in the Study

A. Inventory of Self Appraisal (ISA). This is a paper and pencil test which was designed by Dr. Newton Metfessel and his staff at the Educational Research Center, University of Southern California. The test, consisting of 150 objective items, was designed to help identify the personality and attitudinal factors related to academic achievement. Test items were subdivided into six scales:

1. Authority Relationships
2. Peer Relationships
3. Moral and Social Values
4. School Related Experiences and Aspirations
5. Self Concept
6. Interest Patterns

B. McClelland Thematic Apperception Test of Achievement Motivation (TAT). In this test, ten pictures selected from the Murray TAT and the Symonds Picture Test were shown to groups of from 10 to 25 students each. Short stories (4-5 minutes of writing time) about each picture were obtained. Students were told only that the test was one of their imaginations. An objective scoring technique was employed by two persons, each of whom scored all of the stories for their content indicating motivation or need to achieve. The test was presumed to provide an indication of students' subconscious need to achieve. A reliability coefficient of correlation of .902 between the two sets of scores was obtained.

IV. Findings of the Study

Table 4

Academic Achievement by Socioeconomic Group, Aptitude, and Sex

Socioeconomic Class and Ethnic Group	Achievement	Aptitude and Sex					
		Low (1-33%ile)		Middle (34-66%ile		High (67-99%ile)	
		Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Middle	Achiever	15 (38%)	17 (77%)	23 (62%)	19 (66%)	33 (87%)	39 (93%)
	Nonachiever	24 (62%)	5 (23%)	14 (38%)	10 (34%)	5 (13%)	3 (7%)
Lower (Mexican-American)	Achiever	26 (59%)	17 (40%)	9 (90%)	4 (40%)	2 (100%)	2 (100%)
	Nonachiever	18 (41%)	26 (60%)	1 (10%)	5 (60%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Lower (All Others)	Achiever	10 (32%)	14 (67%)	4 (33%)	13 (81%)	6 (86%)	5 (83%)
	Nonachiever	21 (68%)	7 (33%)	8 (67%)	3 (19%)	1 (14%)	1 (17%)

A. Middle-class students experienced greater academic success than did lower-class students (70.5 per cent as compared with 54.5 per cent for lower (Mexican-American) and 55.9 per cent for lower (all others).

B. The TAT Need for Achievement scores did distinguish between achievers and nonachievers ($p<.001$). Perhaps more significant, however, was the finding that the TAT achievement motivation scores for Mexican-American males were higher than those for all other males and the Mexican-American women's scores for achievement motivation exceeded those of all other groups.

Table 5

Achievement Motivation Average Scores

(Range: 0-24)

Sex	Socioeconomic Group		
	Achievement Motivation Average Scores (Range: 0-24)		
	Middle	Lower (Mexican-American)	Lower (All Others)
Men	5.16	5.18	4.56
Women	5.62	7.32	6.14

C. Only one of the ISA scales, School Related Experiences and Aspirations, distinguished between achievers and nonachievers. The scale did not distinguish between socioeconomic groups.

The following ISA scales distinguished between socioeconomic groups but not between achievers and nonachievers:

Scale	SES Group Receiving Higher Scores
Authority Relationships	Middle
Peer Relationships	Middle
Moral and Social Values	Lower
Self Concept	Middle
Interest Patterns	Middle

D. Significant differences between nonachievers from lower and middle socioeconomic groups were not found in the Need to Achieve test (TAT). However, the following ISA tests indicated significant differences between nonachieving lower and middle socioeconomic groups:

Scale	SES Group Receiving Higher Scores
Peer Relationships	Middle
Moral and Social Values	Lower
Self Concept	Middle
Interest Patterns	Middle

E. Socioeconomic status was closely related to selections of majors:

Table 6

Distribution of Subjects Between Transfer and Terminal Majors

Social Class and Ethnic Group		Transfer		Terminal	
		Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
LOWER					
Mexican-American	Men	18	32.1	38	67.9
	Women				
All Others	Men	37	45.7	44	54.3
	Women	29	42.0	40	58.0
Total Lower		99	38.1	161	61.9
MIDDLE					
	Men	91	79.8	23	20.2
	Women	74	79.6	19	20.4
Total Middle		165	79.7	42	20.3
TOTALS FOR ALL GROUPS		264	56.5	203	43.5

V. Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

1. Achieving lower-class students had higher need to achieve scores than did achieving middle-class students. It may be assumed that the lower-class students at COS did not experience less academic success because they lacked the desire to achieve.

2. The above assumption does not necessarily imply that lower-class youth are more highly motivated to achieve than are middle class youth. Those lower class students who did enter junior college represent a much smaller per cent of students in their age group than did middle-class students. They represent, in short, those who persevered through twelve years of elementary and high school, often against severe cultural handicaps, and wanted to continue their educations beyond the high school level. The results do suggest, however, that those lower-class students who did achieve had to possess far more drive to do so than did those from middle-class backgrounds.

3. The Mexican-American woman faces disadvantages which the Mexican-American male need not encounter. Her choice of two-year vocational majors is limited primarily to the field of business, in which the completion of four English and speech courses is required. In addition, many of the courses in business are highly verbal in content. A number of vocational-technical majors which require the completion of only one English course and in which seven units in performance courses may be earned each semester to offset low English, social science, etc., grades are available to men. English 50 (lowest level of remedial English) was the greatest source of "D" and "F" grades for Mexican-American students.

4. The five Inventory of Self Appraisal scores which distinguish between socioeconomic groups but not between achievers and nonachievers within each socioeconomic group may still be construed to possess some relationship to academic achievement. That is, in identifying lower SES groups, they may also be interpreted as having identified groups who will have less chance of academic success.

5. The relatively high need to achieve scores of both lower SES sub-groups (Mexican-American and all others), combined with the observation about the relative proportion of lower- and middle-class students who achieve academically, suggest that the junior college either is not providing curricula which meet the needs of many of the students or that many of those persons working in the junior college have not determined how their institutions may effectuate the aims for the junior college which have been generally accepted. Whatever the cause, a large proportion of lower-class junior college entrants may be presumed to have experienced frustration and disillusionment in their aspirations to obtain post-high school educations.

6. The percentage of academic achievers among lower-class subjects and the accompanying low aptitude and English placement test scores suggest the need for special curricula, both remedial and academic, which will better serve the needs and aspirations of these persons.

7. Counselors, realizing the proportionately low achievement rate among entering students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, should accept as one of their primary responsibilities the provision of a realistic evaluation of students' aspirations as they relate to the demands of a college education.